

WE CLAIM AS OUR INVENTION:

1. A medical apparatus comprising:

an installed medical system having a control unit for operating the installed medical system;

a remote access interface connected to the control unit for allowing the control unit to communicate with a remote location for remote servicing of the installed medical system;

an external device usable in combination with said installed medical system;

said installed medical system having an interface connected to said control unit, and connectible to said external device when used in combination with said installed medical system, for allowing communication between said control unit and said external device; and

said control unit comprising a router for placing said external device in communication with said remote access interface, via said external device interface, for allowing remote servicing of said external device from said remote location.
2. An apparatus as claimed in claim 1 wherein said installed medical system is a computed tomography system and wherein said external device is a power contrast agent injector.
3. An apparatus as claimed in claim 1 wherein said control unit comprises security protection for isolating said external device from a remainder of said installed medical system not involved in the remote servicing of the external device.
4. An apparatus as claimed in claim 3 wherein said security protection comprises security hardware.

5. An apparatus as claimed in claim 3 wherein said security protection comprises security software.

6. An apparatus as claimed in claim 1 wherein said remote access interface is built into said installed medical system as an original component.

7. An apparatus as claimed in claim 1 wherein said remote access interface is retrofitted into said installed medical system.

8. A method for remotely servicing an external device used in combination with an installed medical system, comprising the steps of:

providing an installed medical system with remote access equipment allowing remote servicing of said installed medical system;
connecting an external device to said installed medical system; and
temporarily connecting said external device to said remote access equipment in said installed medical system for allowing remote servicing of said external device.

9. A method as claimed in claim 8 wherein the step of providing said installed medical installation with remote access equipment comprises building said remote access equipment into said installed medical device at a time of installation of said installed medical device.

10. A method as claimed in claim 8 wherein the step of providing said installed medical device with remote access equipment comprises retrofitting said installed medical system with said remote access equipment after installation of said installed medical system.

11. A method for servicing an external device used in combination with an installed medical device, comprising the steps of:

establishing a communication link between an installed medical device and a service center remote from said installed medical device;
via said communication link, remotely servicing said installed medical device from said service center;
temporarily connecting an external device to said installed medical device;
and
routing said communication link from said installed medical device to said external device; and
remotely servicing said external device from said service center through said installed medical system.

12. A method for charging for servicing of an external device used in combination with an installed medical device, comprising the steps of:

installing an installed medical device manufactured by a first manufacturer;
providing said installed medical device with remote access equipment allowing said installed medical system to communicate with a service center located remote from said installed medical device for remote servicing of said installed medical device;
connecting an external device, manufactured by a second manufacturer, to said installed medical system;
establishing communication, through said remote access equipment of said installed medical device, between said external device and said remote center for remotely servicing said external device; and
imposing a monetary charge from said first manufacturer to said second manufacturer dependent on said remote servicing of said external device.